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BRITISH NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF BRADDOCK'S
DEFEAT.BY HON. N. DARNELL DAVIS, C.M.G., AUDITOR-GENERAL
OF BRITISH GUIANA.

Those clever persons who in the confidence of ignorance criticised adversely the manner in which British generals conducted the campaign on the Indian frontier little knew of the difficulties of waging war in a country without roads, and in many respects in a state of nature. In such a wilderness warfare cannot be waged according to European tactics. The greatest humiliation that ever befell the British arms was the result of the obstinacy of a general who, though personally as brave as a man could be, despised the advice of those who knew the methods of Indian warfare and obstinately insisted upon forming the line of battle in the "bush."

In the last week of August, 1755, Great Britain rang with the news of a terrible disaster that had befallen a division of the army under General Braddock, near the river Monongahela, in North America. A disgraceful defeat had been inflicted by a much inferior force of French, Canadians, and Indians, whose victory was gained by their commander's superior knowledge of the manner of making war in the wilderness. The news was brought to Portsmouth by his majesty's ship the *Seahorse*; and on the 26th of August the *London Gazette* published the particulars, as far as they had then been obtained, of the affair and of the heavy losses suffered in killed and wounded. Later on came further official reports; and, as was the custom of the time, when the newspaper "special correspondent" had not yet come into existence, one by one private letters written in America to friends in Britain furnished more information. When all the details became known, it was easy to realize that there had been a fearful

slaughter of the British troops; and what was indeed a sad part of the calamitous business, it was then clear that much of the butchery had been done by British soldiers themselves when in a state of frightful panic. Of fourteen hundred and sixty officers and men, British and Provincial, military and naval, four hundred and fifty-six had been killed and four hundred and twenty-one were wounded. The splendid bravery of the officers in this untoward affair shines out in British history. The list of casualties among them is simply appalling. The general himself, after having had four horses shot under him, in mounting his fifth was wounded to death, and died four days after the battle. His secretary was killed on the field. Of three colonels, one was killed and two were wounded. The solitary major was wounded. Of twenty-one captains, seven were killed and seven were wounded. Of thirty-eight lieutenants, eleven were killed and fifteen were wounded. Of fourteen second-lieutenants or ensigns, three were killed and five were wounded. A midshipman of the naval detachment was killed. The army chaplain was wounded. Of six surgeons, one was killed and five were wounded. The quartermaster was wounded. Of fifty-eight sergeants, seventeen were killed and twenty were wounded. Of sixty-one corporals and bombardiers, eighteen were killed and twenty-two were wounded. Of eighteen gunners, six were killed and eight were wounded. The boatswain's mate was killed. Of thirty-two drummers, two were killed and six were wounded. Of twelve hundred matrosses and private soldiers, three hundred and eighty-six were killed and three hundred and twenty eight were wounded. Truly, this was a fearful butcher's bill!

But, besides the facts of the gravity of the defeat, another fact, not much taken note of at the time, was made apparent through this disaster. It was the aptitude of the Colonial militia for warfare. At the beginning of the campaign the British general had contemned the Provincials because they could not go through military manœuvres with the punctilio of the Guards at a review in Hyde

Park. In his dying hours General Braddock applauded the Colonials for their soldierly conduct in the battle. Officers and men alike of these Provincials had fought and died like soldiers. One of these Colonial officers was a young Virginian, who served without pay as an aide-de-camp to the general. Though young in years, he was mature in experience of warfare in the wilds of America. During the battle his tall figure was much in evidence as he bore himself with the utmost bravery. The Indian braves on the French side specially singled him out for destruction, but without success. Two horses were shot under him and four bullets went through his clothes without touching him. The young hero afterwards became the "Father of his Country."

Of the casualties among the officers some particulars may prove interesting. Of the general's staff, his secretary, Shirley, was killed, shot through the head, and Captains Orme and Morris, aides-de-camp, were wounded. The deputy quartermaster-general, Sir John Sinclair, and the assistant quartermaster-general, Matthew Leslie, were both wounded. Of Sir Peter Halkett's regiment, there were killed, Sir Peter himself, Captains Tallon and Getkins, Lieutenants Halkett and Allen, and other subalterns, Townsend and Nartlow. The wounded officers of this regiment were, Lieutenant-Colonel Gage, Lieutenants Littleler, Dunbar, Treeby, Simpson, and Lock, and other subalterns, Disney and Pennington. Of Dunbar's regiment were killed, Captain Cholmley and Subalterns Grimble, Wideman, Hansard, Brereton, and Hart. The wounded were, Captains Bowyer and Ross, and Subalterns Barbut, Walsham, Glandwin, Edmeston, Montreseur, Macmullen, Crow and Sterling. Of the artillery, Captain Smith was killed and Lieutenants Buckhanon, McCloud, and McCuller were wounded. Of the engineers, Peter McKeller, Gordon, and Williamson were wounded. Of the naval detachment, Lieutenant Spendelow and Midshipman Talbot were killed. Two officers, apparently volunteers, appear in the list of casualties. These were Captain Stone, of General Lascelles's regiment,

who was killed, and Captain Floyer, of General Warburton's regiment, who was wounded. Among the officers of the Provincial troops there was a long list of casualties. Of the independent companies from New York, Lieutenant Sumain was killed and Lieutenants Sumain, Howarth, and Gray were wounded. The two last named were of Captain Demercier's independent company. Of the Virginian troops, Captains Polson and Peyrounie, and Subalterns Hamilton, Wright, Splitchorff, and Wagoner, were killed, and Captain Stephenson and Subaltern Stuart were wounded. Of the gallant conduct of the Virginians Washington wrote to Governor Dinwiddie, on the 8th of July, "Our poor Virginians behaved like men, and died like soldiers, for I believe that out of three companies that were there that day scarce 30 were left alive. Captain Peyrounie and all his officers down to a corporal were killed; Captain Polson shared almost as hard a fate for only one of his escaped." Among the Colonial officers who were not wounded was Captain Gates, to whom years after Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga.

The greatest loss that the British army suffered in this miserably mismanaged affair was the loss of prestige with the American colonists. Washington marked the misconduct of the "cowardly dogs of soldiers," as he called them, who, he said, "broke and ran like sheep before the hounds." His own valorous behavior attracted to him the eyes of his fellow-colonists. The solid reputation he enjoyed was voiced from the pulpit when, on the 17th of August following the catastrophe, the Reverend Samuel Davis, in preaching to the volunteers of Hanover, said, "I may point out to the public that heroic youth Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

A number of papers relating to Braddock's expedition were collected by Mr. Winthrop Sargent, and published in 1856 among the *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*. That collection does not include the following letters written from America to friends in Great Britain

by residents in the Colonies. With all the freshness of contemporary correspondence they relate the misfortune to the British arms and tell what the Colonists thought of the catastrophe:

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, AUGUST 27, 1755.

Extract of a letter from Will's Creek, July 10, 1755.

"Dear Sir, I send you the following melancholy account.

"On the 6th of July, General Braddock near Frazer settlement, six miles to the south of Fort du Quesne on the Monogahela river, came up with the French army of 1500 regulars and 600 irregulars drawn out of their lines, they having made choice of a very advantageous ground and intrenched in a masterly manner; General Braddock with Sir Peter Halket's regiment of 700 and Col. Dunbar's of 700, with 1200 Virginians, Mary-landers and Carolinians, and 100 Indians, advanced against them.

"Before our men could get within musket shot of the French, the Indians in ambuscade surprised our army by firing singly at the General and other particular Officers, and as soon as Colonels Gage and Burtôn had begun the attack, which was very fierce, the Indians immediately gave the war-hoop, and rising from the thickets, discovered themselves, when the advanced guard being between three fires gave way, and was rallied by their officers, gave one fire, and then retreated in the greatest confusion imaginable, till they had thrown Dunbar's regiment into disorder, their officers with a great deal of trouble, after having run several times through, rallied them a second time, when they stood a fire from the French, and without returning it retired in great disorder with Dunbar's regiment, and left their officers a sacrifice to the enemy, and out of sixty of them but five escaped, being either killed or wounded. The Virginians Etc, engaged afterwards closely for three hours, but were obliged to retire. General Braddock after having five horses shot under him, was wounded in the lungs, and died on the fourth day after the battle at Will's Creek. Among the slain are reckoned Sir Peter Halket and his two¹ sons, Capt. Morris, Capt. Cholmondley, Secretary Shirley, in all about 14 officers, and near 600 men missing; amongst the wounded are Colonel Gage and Burton mortally wounded; Col. Sinclair, and Capt. Orme. The General declar'd that never did officers behave better, nor private men worse, this being the second time of their sacrificing their officers, being the same regiment that deserted Sir Peter at the battle of Preston-pans under Sir John Cope. Our army lost all its baggage, provisions, &c. and had these two

¹ A mistake. James, the third son, a Lieutenant in the Forty-fourth, was killed.

regiments stood the ground, it would very probably have put an end to the contest in America."

NOTE.—The statement in the last paragraph was contradicted in the following paragraph which appeared in the *Whitehall Evening Post* on 2d September:

WHITEHALL EVENING POST, AUGUST 30 TO SEPTEMBER 2, 1755.

"Observing in some of the Papers that Sir Peter Halket's Regiment is charged with deserting him at the Battle of Preston-Pans, in the last Rebellion, we hope it may not be disagreeable to our Readers to have that Charge cleared up:—The Author is greatly mistaken in the Name of the then Colonel of that Regiment, Col. Lee, having the Regiment then, and so far was the Regiment from deserting their Officers, and thereby letting them fall a Sacrifice to the Enemy, that they were the only Regiment that kept the Field, with the brave Col. Gardner, against the Rebels, whereby many of them were slain, and a greater Number wounded with Scythes, Etc. and taken Prisoners; were afterwards confined in Inveresk Church, from whence they attempted to make their Escape; afterwards were obliged to travel with the Rebel Army to Brampton, near Carlisle, from whence, under Favour of the Night, at the Hazard of their Lives, they deserted from the Rebels; and, wounded, as most of them were, and in the Depth of Winter, by travelling across the Country, joined General Wade's Army at, or near Newcastle: And in the late Hedge Fight in America, amongst the discerning Part of Mankind, and those who are Judges of Military Affairs, their Conduct is rather commended than condemned."

LONDON EVENING POST, AUGUST 26 TO 28, 1755.

"It is rumoured that most of the officers were killed by the European Troops firing upon them when they endeavoured to rally them; and that very few of our men were killed by the enemy; in short, that a full account of this action would disclose such a scene as was never seen before in our, or perhaps in any other army. As many prejudiced or misinformed people take occasion from a little inaccuracy in the first account of the defeat of the forces that went to attack Du Quesne Fort, to cast very unjust reflections on the Irish nation in general, and lay the whole blame of that unfortunate affair on the two regiments that were sent over from Ireland to Virginia; it is fit to take notice, that regiments of the Irish Establishment are not properly speaking Irish Troops, but consist of English and Scotch, with a few natives of Ireland mixed with them, and sometimes none at all. And from divers circumstances we are inclined to conclude that the defeat of General Braddock was not owing to the misbehaviour of the two regiments in question, but to the want of a sufficient number of Indians to fight those on the French side in their own way; for according to some private accounts, when the Regular Troops ran away, they told their

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Officers it was in vain to stand and spend their ammunition to no purpose against trees and bushes, but that if they could have a sight of the enemy, they would fight him. If this was really the case it should seem that a retreat ought to have been resolved upon, the moment they found they had fell into an ambuscade, and were flanked on both sides by the Indians and French Rangers, who being excellent marksmen and having the advantage of the woods, were an overmatch for any regular troops."

LONDON EVENING POST, SEPTEMBER 9 TO 11, 1755.

Extract of a letter from Virginia.

"As for this unfortunate Battle, the accounts are very confused. It is generally allowed that the troops never saw above 300 Frenchmen, Indians and all included; that the flight of men was occasioned by the great disgust they had to their officers. The soldiers from their first arrival, had shewed much discontent; and the officers resolved to get the better and punished them frequently, but the more the punishments, the more the discontents increased. They say the troops were shot at from behind trees, and could not see their enemies, on which they ran away, the officers would have forced them to stand, and killed some of the men for not standing, so it became a fight between the men and officers, for the men fired on the officers that struck them, and ran quite away to the meadows, where Col. Dunbar was with 800 fresh men; they carried him with them and all went to Wills's Creek, and I fear they will not long stay there. Their leaving the meadows in such haste and disorder has had a worse effect than the defeat of General Braddock, there our men were charged by an enemy, but they left their forts in the meadows, nobody can guess why."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 20, 1755.

Extract of a letter from Fort Cumberland, dated July 16.

"The Army under the Command of General Braddock, after marching from this Place as far as the Little Meadows, halted there. The General, finding great Delay from the Line of Baggage, and that it was impossible with the small Number of Troops he had, to make his Line of March secure, determined to proceed himself with 1200 Men, 10 Pieces of Cannon, Amunition and Provisions proportionable to the Undertaking, and left 800 Men with the Body of the Convoy, under the Command of Col: Dunbar, with Orders to move forward as fast as the Nature of the Service would admit. Thus General Braddock marched with great Expedition, and encamped on the 8th inst within ten miles of the French Fort. The Guides were all summoned to attend, and questioned as to the next Day's March, the General having been in-

formed of a dangerous Defile, call'd the Narrows. Upon the Guides Report it was judged most expedient to pass the Monongaheela twice at two different Fords, which were neither of them Knee-deep, by which the Narrows were to be avoided, and likewise a very bad Passage of the farther Creek. To secure the two Passages of the River, the General ordered the two Grenadier Companies as a Part of the Detachment, which was completed to 300 Men, with two five Pounders, under the Command of Lieutenant-Colonel Gage, with proper Guides to march before Break of Day, and to make the second Crossing or Ford of the Monongaheela, from which the first was a Mile distant, and they were to take an advantageous Station at the last Ford. Sir John S' Clair, with a working Party of 200 Men was to follow at Day-break, and the Whole was to march at Six. The Plan was exactly and punctually executed, and the Artillery and all the Troops had passed the River a second Time at One o'Clock.

"As soon as the whole was over, the General ordered two Detachments to advance, and Sir John S' Clair to proceed as usual. About Half a Mile after the Junction of the two Roads, viz, that from the Narrows and that from the River, a heavy and quick Firing was heard. The General believing a Party of French and Indians had taken Post, immediately ordered Col. Burton, with his Van-Guard, to reinforce his Detachment, at the same Time disposed the Column in such a Manner, as to defend it from any Attack, and to disengage more Men to be ready for Action. The French and Indians, the Number of each not known, had, as we found after, possessed the Sides and Brow of a Hill, in a circular Form, from the Extreme of which some of them fired upon one of our advanced Flank Parties. This immediatly struck a general Pannic; the Men could not be persuaded to form regularly; in great Confusion they fell back upon the Party which Sir John S' Clair commanded, and Sir John's upon Col: Burton's. Every Exhortation and Persuasion was used by the General to make them advance, or fall back in the Line of March. Examples of all Kinds were given by the General and Officers, but the Pannic was so general, and the Firing so extensive that no Order could be restored. After three Hours Irregularity and Waste of all the Amunition, during which Time almost all the Officers were killed or wounded, by sometimes advancing in Bodies, at othertimes separate, to encourage the Men, the Soldiers left the Field, and crossed the River with Precipitation, abandoning the Artillery, Provisions, and Baggage to the Enemy, and many of them through away their Arms and Accourtements; nor could they be stopped until they had run forty Miles, notwithstanding the Enemy pursued no farther than the River. The General had five Horses shot under him, and received a mortal Wound in his Lungs, and in this unhappy State was very near being left in the Enemy's Power, being deserted by the Men, and brought off by the Assistance of a few Officers, who were de-

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terminated not to forsake him.¹ He died the 13th inst. An Express was immediately sent to Col. Dunbar, with Orders to send Amunition, Provisions, and Waggons for the Wounded.

"P. S. The Men have by no means recovered their Fright and are so little to be confided in, that Col. is moving to this Place."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 30, 1755.

"The French and Indians that lay in Ambuscade, started up at once in a great Body, at a Time when we did not think of their Approach, and attacked us with such Fury on all Sides, that the General could not put his Men in Order. They soon made themselves Master of our Artillery, and pointed them against ourselves, which did most of the Execution . . . Sir John St. Clair, Quater-master General, a brave and active Officer, was dangerously wounded, but escaped with 200 Men, and joined Col. Dunbar, who was twenty Miles behind with 800 Men, and the heavy Baggage, and is now retired to Will's Creek, where they will be able to make a Stand and defend the frontiers. The 400 Indians that marched with our Army from Will's Creek as Friends, left us two Days before the Battle; how they came to leave us, or whither they went, no body can tell, but 'tis imagined it was they who betrayed us.

"Another Letter says, The G—l was universally disliked, by Reason of his overbearing, rough, haughty Disposition. He was carried on Officer's Shoulders about twenty Miles, not a common Man would touch him. He was buried in the Highway, to prevent the Indians from abusing his Body. While he lived, he cursed his own Men, constantly for Cowardice, and applauded the Virginians. After the General was buried, Col. Dunbar blew up his Powder, and immediately march'd back to Fort Cumberland."

WHITEHALL EVENING POST, SEPTEMBER 30 TO OCTOBER 2, 1755.

Plantation News.

Extract of a Letter From Port-Royal in Virginia to a Gentleman in Glasgow, dated July 28.

"I wrote you lately by this Ship giving you a very impe(rfe)ct Account of the Battle on Monongehela, the Particulars of which I send you inclos'd. The General's Vanguard, consisting of two Companies of Grenadiers, commanded by Sir John Sinclair, when within six Miles of the French Fort, were fir'd upon in an open Field from a Plain cover'd with large Oaks and high Weeds; in about an Hour afterwards, the General came up with nigh 1300 Men, and began the Engagement; he directed his Fire towards where he saw Flashes and Smoke, without

¹ Captain Orme, one of Braddock's aides-de-camp, wrote on the 18th of July, "The General was with great difficulty brought from the field, being guarded only but by a few Officers."

seeing the Enemy. The British Army were eager to engage, and petition'd his Excellency to allow them to rush in and attack their Enemies in their own Way, but he would by no Means hear of it; so they stood there about two Hours and a Half without being able to hurt the Enemy, and at last retreated, after having 600 Men Killed and wounded; the secret Order of the War-Office, the Military Chest, a Quantity of Provisions, with the whole Artillery (except two Cannons, with Col. Dunbar) left on the Field: They were pursued only about a Mile, from whence it is conjectur'd that the French or Indians were greatly inferior to our Men. I cannot as yet understand whether they were attack'd by French or Indians; some say there were no more than 300 of them. The French were form'd into a Kind of Half Moon on both Sides of the Road, and suffer'd the Van-Gaurd to be almost inclosed by them before they discover'd themselves by Firing. The above is all from the best Authority, and such as can be entirely depended upon."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, OCTOBER 3, 1755.

Extract of a private Letter from Boston, in New England, dated August 18.

"General Braddock was (as every one expected) attacked from the Woods by the Enemy, but could see nobody to fire at; and so many of his People have fell a Sacrifice to his Obstinacy. At the first Fire the Indians gave the War Whoop, which is composed of such hideous Yells, as were never heard in any European Campaign. Major Washington was defeated in this Manner; and being with General Braddock, he begg'd and pray'd the General, when they were first attacked, to let him draw off about 300 in each Wing to scour the Woods, but Braddock refused it and obstinately persisted in the Form of a Field Battle, his Men standing Shoulder to Shoulder. This is, and always will be the Consequence of Old England Officers and Soldiers being sent to America; they have neither Skill nor Courage for this Method of Fighting, for the Indians will kill them as fast as Pigeons, and they stand no Chance, either offensive or defensive: 300 New England Men would have routed this Party of Indians. A few Days ago we had an Account from the Country about 150 Miles off, of 300 Indians attacking a Scouting Party of New England Men, being 80 in Number; the Indians fired first, and killed one Man; the New England Men took to the Woods and Swamps after them and killed 40 of them, the rest escaped. In the late Fight at Nova Scotia, the New England Men were commanded by Col. Monckton, an Old England Officer: He wanted them to keep in Army Order, but when the Indians fired on them out of the Woods, they broke their Ranks and ran into the Woods after them: The Colonel said, the Devil was in them, and asked what they meant by this Conduct, but they soon returned and shew'd him several Indian Heads and Scalps. This is our Country Fighting.

"We want nothing but Money and Liberty to act as I said before (in former Letters) and we'll soon have all North America: and remember my Words, I do affirm that if they send over 20000 Men from England, they'll only fall a Sacrifice to the Enemy. We have now about 4000 New England Forces on the March to Crown Point (being about two Thirds of the Way between Boston and Canada) many of them Men of good Estates in the Country who employ Men on their Farms at higher Wages, than they themselves receive. We have about 2000 more with our Governor at Oswego, near Niagara, and 20,000 more in this Province, ready to start for Canada if Orders come from Home. In short, when we raise Men here by Beat of Drum, we have such Numbers offer, that we are forced to turn many home again (this I am an eyewitness of) both on Account of their Number and Youth; some Lads about 13, 14, and 15 Years old offer, who can shoot a Bird flying with any Man in this Province. This is a right Martial Spirit, and seems to run through the Whole of this Country People.

"We have great Talk of another Expedition to the Ohio very quickly. I hope by this Time the State Officers in England begin to see the Consequence of North America; if the French get Masters here, depend upon it all the West Indies will fall into their Hands, then farewell to England itself."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, OCTOBER 6, 1755.

Extract of a Letter from New York, dated August 1.

"In all military Affairs it seems to belong to the New England Provinces to set a proper Example. All agree that they are better able to plan and execute than any of the British Colonies. We put no Confidence in any other Troops than theirs; and it is generally lamented that the British Veterans were not put into Garrison, and New-England Irregulars sent to the Ohio. Their Men fight from Principle and always succeed. The Behaviour of the New-England Provincials at Albany is equally admirable and satisfactory. Instead of the Devastations committed by the Troops in 1746, not a Farmer has lost a Chicken or even a Mess of Herbs. They have five Chaplains, and maintain the best Order in the Camp. Public Prayers, Psalm-singing and Martial Exercises engrossed their whole time at Albany. Twice a Week they have Sermons and are in the very best Frame of Mind for an Army, looking for Success in a Dependence upon Almighty God, and a concurrence of Means. Would to God the New-England Disposition in this Respect were catching! . . .

"Three Days before the Battle on the Ohio (says a Letter from Virginia, dated Aug. 16) the General, by repeated harsh Treatment of the friendly Indians, lost three advanced Parties of them. The two first were thought to be taken by the Enemy: but when the third was missed they had no Reason to believe, but that they went off voluntarily;

and the very next Day at Noon, in going thro' the Woods, the greater Part of those that then remained took themselves suddenly away."

WHITEHALL EVENING POST, OCTOBER 9 TO 11, 1755.

Extract of a Letter from an Officer about the late Battle in America.

"In advancing towards the Enemy the Fire in Front was thick and heavy; and two of our Parties, one of three hundred, the other of two hundred Men, falling back, caused such Confusion and Pannick that no military Expedient thought of had any effect upon our Men; who, after firing away, in the most irregular Manner, all their Ammunition, ran quite off, leaving to the Enemy the Artillery and Baggage. The main Body was with Col. D——, or the whole Army would have been destroyed: Loss of Horses and Want of Carriages for the Wounded, made us destroy Ammunition and superfluous Provision. The whole Artillery is lost. The Troops are so weakened by Deaths, Wounds, and Sickness, that it is judged impossible to make any farther Attempt for the present. It is affirmed, that the military Chest, with £25,000. to pay the Army, and all the General's Papers, are lost. Capt. Waggoner, with 170 Virginians, went up to where the Enemy was hid and routed them: But O unhappy! our Infatuateds seeing a Smoke, fired and killed him with several of his Men.

"Capt. Polson, another brave Virginian, with his Company, attacked the Enemy a little before the Retreat was beat, which they hearing, surrounded these brave Fellows, and cut the Captain and most of them to Pieces. It is with Regret I send this sad Account.

"P. S. D——'s hasty Retreat seems still a great Mystery."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, OCTOBER 17, 1755.

Extract of a Letter from Virginia, dated August 1.

"I shall now give you an Account of the Engagement on the Ohio, which happened the 9th ult. You'll no Doubt see various Accounts of it in the Public Papers, but the following you may depend on General B—— picked out of the whole Army about 1300 Men chosen as the best, and left Col. Dunbar, with the Remainder of the Forces, behind, with about Half the Artillery. How far he was from the General at the Time of the Engagement, we have no certain Accounts: The Day before, the General was on the very Spot; and by the Bushes being beaten down, and other Marks, he imagined, that there had not been above 3 or 400 of the Enemy encamped there the Night before, and as it was just on the other Side of the River, he thought he was not safe to stay there all Night, so returned, and stayed all Night on this Side. In the Morning the General ordered over Sir John St Clair, with 150 Men; immediately after him Col. Sir Peter Halkett, with 200 Men and as soon as he saw him over, he marched over himself with the rest of the 1300. He was but just got over when he heard them begin to fire.

Sir John St Clair's Men gave Ground upon the first Fire, met Sir Peter Halkett's Men, put them into Disorder and Fear, and they joined the General's and struck them into Confusion and Terror. With much Trouble they were rallied, and marched up once more, but still in such Confusion that when Sir Peter Halkett ordered the Men in Front to fire, altho' they were drawn up twelve Men deep, they all fired thro' Fear and Confusion so that of the 600 killed and wounded about 300 were destroyed by themselves.¹ Immediately after the first Fire, they all run, except the Officers, and the new raised American Forces who stood to the last. The first of the Men who run, and met Col. Dunbar with the rest of the Forces and Artillery, told him such a terrible Story, that he thought it prudent to destroy most of his Provisions, blow up his Powder, and destroy his Shells, and 'tis believed, nailed the Cannon that they should not be of Service to the Enemy, and marched inwards as fast as he could, so, you see, what of our Artillery the Enemy did not take is rendered useless: a terrible Loss, as there never was a finer Train.

"There were about Half of the Officers who went into the Field kill'd or wounded, and out of 300 of the Virginia Regiment, only thirty left alive (brave Fellows!) You'll no Doubt, have Lists of the Kill'd and Wounded, so I shall only say, that Sir John St Clair and Col. Burton were wounded, but are recovering. Your Cousin John Wright had got a Commission from the Governor in the Virginia Regiment. He, poor Lad! fell, and I dare say died gloriously. Mr Robert Stuart (whom I imagine you know) who is a very pretty young Gentleman, had, by the Interest of several Gentlemen of Note, got a Captain's Commission last Fall, and at the Engagement had the Command of a Company of 30 Light Horse. He attended the General in the Engagement, and supplied him with four Horses, which were shot under him, and a fifth which he was mounting when he was shot. Captain Stuart himself had two horses shot under him, and of his whole Company he had only four Men left alive, who escaped with him: he has gain'd as great a Character as any Man with so little Experience possibly could. The General lived three Days, and before he died desired Capt. Orme² to recommend

¹ In his letter of the 18th of July, to Governor Dinwiddie, Washington wrote: "About $\frac{3}{4}$ of killed and wounded received their shot from our own cowardly dogs of soldiers, who gathered themselves into a body, contrary to orders, 10 or 12 deep, would then level, fire, and shoot down the men before them."

² Of the good conduct of the Colonial troops in this battle Captain Orme, of the regular army and one of Braddock's aides-de-camp, wrote to Governor Dinwiddie on the 18th of July, from Fort Cumberland: "Mr Washington had two horses shot under him, and his cloths shot through in several places, behaving the whole time with the greatest courage and resolution." . . . "I have the pleasure to acquaint you that Capt. Polson (who was kill'd) and his company behaved extremely well, as did Captain Stuart and his light horse, who I must beg leave to recommend to your protection, and to desire you will be so kind to use your best endeavours to serve him, as he lost by the death of the General, the rewards he really deserved by his gallant and faithful attendance on him." Captain Stuart found the fifth horse for the General, and was one of the officers who carried Braddock off the field of battle.

Capt. Stuart in the warmest Manner to the Governor, and to the Commanding Officer, who should succeed him. Had the General lived, Stuart would have been well provided for. This you may depend to be a true account of that inglorious Battle:"

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, OCTOBER 23, 1755.

Extract of a Letter from Maryland, dated August 21.

"Things look very gloomy here ever since the Defeat of our Troops, and nothing has hitherto saved these Colonies but the Fear the French were in for Niagara; for they marched immediately back to meet Governor Shirley, without losing a Moment, after they had secured the Amunition and Artillery which they took from General Braddock and knew of Col Dunbar's having destroyed all his.

"There never was such an Expedition so ill conducted. From the General to the common Soldier they despised the Enemy. The few Indians we had with us were neglected, and all the intelligence they brought disregarded, yet no Steps taken to procure any other. The General hurried on with half the Troops, in order to acquire the greater Glory, and fell headlong into an Ambuscade of 1500 Indians and 300 Canadians, who were only sent out to harass him in his March; for the Regular Troops were entrenched in a Pass about two Miles farther on, and only a few Detachments of them came up Time enough to be Witnesses of the unexpected Victory.

"That this was the Conduct of the General is confirmed by all the Officers who dare speak out: and the above recited Posture of the Enemy is every Day confirmed by Prisoners who were taken before the Engagement, and made their Escape in the March taken back to Niagara.

"They have not left above 400 Men on the Ohio; but they have nothing to fear from a dispirited, divided, and defenceless People: And if the British Parliament doth not interpose to force Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland to unite their Forces, it requires no great Skill in Politics to foretell that these Colonies will be lost to Britain: and if Governor Shirley doth not succeed, it is not doubted but they will pour a considerable Force upon us this Fall. One would think the Merchants who have Effects here, and all who have a Connection with them would join in a Representation to Parliament: for the Disputes between the People and the two Proprietors prevent every salutary Measure for the public Good. An Extent of seventy-five Miles of the Maryland Government, which was well settled, is now entirely deserted, and every Day confirms the Account of many Indian Spies being seen on the Frontiers: Yet People this Way are no more alarmed than if they were in China, because the Enemy hath not yet surrounded their Habitations. Nothing but some general Calamity will make them stir, and then for want of due Precaution every Thing will be lost."

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, OCTOBER 31, 1755.

Extract of a Letter from Fort Cumberland, dated July 23.

"I believe I am the first Chaplain who ever saved a Pair of Colours, which I took within fifty Yards of the Cannon, when the Enemy were Masters of them. The French and Indians crept about in small Parties so that the Fire was quite round us, and in all the Time I never saw one, nor could I on Enquiry find any one who saw ten together. The Loss killed and wounded 864. The French had 2000 Men, besides Indians, we had six Indians, and they at least as many hundreds, We marched near 400 Miles in three Months, cut 350 thro' Woods, and for the last 200 saw no House but this dirty Fort. Rum 20's a Gallon, the worst brown Sugar 4s 6d a Pound, a Year old Calf sold to Sir Peter Halket and our Mess at 3.£. after the 25th of June a Dollar for a Pint of Rum, so you may judge of our Distress. The whole Country is a Wood."

NOTE.—The Army List for 1755 gives the names of the chaplains of the Forty-fourth and Forty-eighth, the regiments serving on the expedition, as follows:

"44th Foot. Chaplain, Philip Hughes, Commission dated 4 January, 1752.

48th Foot. Chaplain, John Hamilton, 13th November, 1754."

Which of these it was does not appear; but one chaplain was returned as "wounded" in the list of casualties.

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, NOVEMBER 3, 1755.

Potomack, Maryland, July 27, 1755.

"Having last Year given you some Account of the Military transactions in this Country, I shall now, according to your Desire, continue to relate what has happened worthy of Notice since that Time. And as you wanted to know at what Distance we lay from the Ohio I shall begin with telling you that from Frederick Town, Maryland to Fort Cumberland on Will's Creek, just under the Allegany Mountains is 105 Miles; from Fort Cumberland to the Little Meadows twenty, from the Little to the Great Meadows thirty, and from the Great Meadows to Fort Du Quesne on the Forks of Monongahela and Ohio Rivers fifty-four: in all two hundred and nine Miles. The Country beyond Will's Creek is quite an uninhabited Desart and full of Woods; from Will's Creek to Frederic Town is but thinly peopled, and consequently but little clear Ground. And from Frederic Town Eastward, tho' somewhat more populous, at least seven-eighths of it is covered with Woods.

"The Virginians after the Defeat at the Great Meadows July 3. 1754, went into Quarters at Alexandria; and one Independent Company, which had been in the Engagement and two more just then arrived from New York, were ordered to Will's Creek to build a Fort (new Fort Cumberland) which they accordingly effected. In the mean Time,

Governor Sharpe, having received his Majesty's Commission to command in chief the Forces destined for Ohio, carried on Affairs during the Winter with great Spirit and Expedition. Recruiting Parties were out everywhere, and by the End of March, when the two Regiments arrived from England about 700 Men on the Virginian Establishment with one Company of 100 Men from Maryland, marched to Will's Creek. On the arrival of General Braddock Governor Sharpe's Commission dropt

"After the regiments had rested about a fortnight at Alexandria, and been completed by Draughts from the Virginia Troops, they began their March for Will's Creek on the 12th of April; but notwithstanding the unwearied Vigilance of Sir John St Clair, Quarter-Master General, the last Division of the Army did not arrive there till late in May, occasioned by the Want of Waggon and Horses. The Army remained at Will's Creek till a sufficient Number of these arrived, and then began their march for the Ohio. The whole Army, the Independent Companies from Carolina, New York, Virginia and Maryland included amounted to 2500 fighting Men, with a fine Train of Artillery and Plenty of Ammunition and other warlike Stores. Before marched Sir John Sinclair with an advanced party of 200 Men to cut down the Woods and prepare a Road for the Army. Besides, several Companies were sent out as Scouts to range the Woods on both Sides to prevent any Attack from a concealed Enemy. The Rest of the Army followed in two Divisions, the first commanded by the General himself, and the Second which followed at some Distance, by Colonel Dunbar. In this Disposition they marched without Molestation, or even without seeing an Enemy, except two or three small Bodies of Indians, which Sir John surprised and drove off, till the 9th of July, when, after having crossed the Monongahela, about four or five Miles from Fort du Quesne, the General, who seemed to think he would meet with but little Opposition, gave immediate Order for all the Scouts and Rangers forthwith to join the main Body of the Army. They were at this time come to a little narrow valley, about a Mile in Length, with pretty steep Banks on each Side. At the Extremity of this Valley was a little Hill over which they behoved to pass in their way to the Fort. Thro' this Valley contrary to the Advice, or rather Opinion of most of the Officers, was the Army ordered to march.

"Monochatucha, Chief of the Indians in Alliance, prayed the General not to enter this Defile till both Sides had been thoroughly reconnoitred, telling him, that it was a most dangerous Pass, and that if the Enemy intended an Attack, he did not know where he could do it with more advantage: But this Advice was rejected, and they marched forward until the Enemy having begun to ascend the Hill, they received a close and terrible Fire, from the unseen French in Front, and at the same Time another on both Flanks from the Indians who were posted

along the Banks on each Side. You may easily figure the Amazement and Terror of the Soldiers, to see their Companions dead and dying on every Side, and no Enemy to be seen. Sir John Sinclair, who commanded the Front, observing their Confusion and being apprehensive of a second Attack of the same Kind, immediately ordered the Men to draw back, and posted them singly behind Trees, in the Indian Manner; where probably they would not only have maintained themselves, but might have done Execution against the Enemy, had not the General, who came up from the Rear upon the first Fire, upbraided them for Cowards, and with his Sword drawn forced them in a Manner to return to their Ranks. Monochatucha here came up again to the General, begging him to retreat, or they must be cut to Pieces; but he received no Answer. He then went to Sir John Sinclair, and prayed him either to draw off the Men himself, or to intercede with the General; but Sir John told him, that from the first, it was not in his Power, and for speaking to the General, that he had no more Influence than he had. By this Time the two Companies of Grenadiers were formed, and endeavoured with a Huzzah to gain the Hill, but they again received so close and heavy a Fire, that they fell back upon the Center, the Center upon the Rear, and the Pannic seizing the whole Army, notwithstanding the utmost Efforts of the Officers, they all fell into the utmost Confusion. The Officers now, fearing all would be lost, formed themselves into a Body, and with Colours flying, marched up towards the Enemy, hoping thereby to animate the Soldiers, and bring them to their Duty, but alas! their Fate, was no better and Numbers fell, without being able to see the Enemy: the Indians kept close concealed, and not above three or four were ever seen at a time: and what was still worse, the Confusion now among the Soldiers was now so great, that when they fired, the greatest Execution was among their own Friends.¹ The Engagement, or rather Slaughter, continued three Hours and a Half, when there was a total Rout. Those that escaped, fled to Col Dunbar, who was at some Distance behind; who, upon hearing of the Defeat, doubtless imagining the French more numerous than they really were, blew up his Ammunition, destroyed the Artillery and the Baggage, and putting the wounded men in the Waggon, retreated to Will's Creek."

"General Braddock had five Horses killed under him, and after receiving several Wounds, fell from his Saddle, and was bore off by the surviving Grenadiers.

"Colonel Halkett is much lamented. He was a good officer, and a

¹ Captain Orme wrote to Governor Dinwiddie on the 8th of July: "The Officers were absolutely sacrificed by their unparalleled good behaviour, advancing before their men sometimes in bodies, and sometimes separately, hoping by such an example to engage the soldiers to follow them, but to no purpose." The same officer wrote on the same day to Commodore Keppel: "The General directed me, Sir, to tell you, from him, that nothing could equal the gallantry and conduct of the officers, nor the bad behaviour of the men."

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Gentleman of a humane and benevolent Disposition. He was shot dead about an hour after they engaged. Those who were near him say, that he fell with a Smile on his Countenance which they ascribed as well to his inward Satisfaction of his having strongly advised against the imprudent Step to which he had fallen a Victim, as to the Pleasure of Dying in the Exercise of his Duty, and in the Service of his Country.¹

“Major Washington, a Gentleman much respected,² who went out a Volontier, and was appointed one of the General's Aid-de-Camp's is returned to Alexandria. He confirms the almost incredible Account of the French and Indians not having been above 350 or 400 Men strong. He is returned unhurt, though his Cloaths were shot thro' in many Places. What seems as much lamented as any one Circumstance in the Defeat, is the Loss of eight pieces of Brass Cannon, not so much for their Value, but for the great Need the Enemy had for them, being but very ill provided before. The military Chest is likewise gone, but no great Account is made of that; it being only worth £20,000 when here about three months ago.”

The growing prestige of the Colonial militia was recognized in the *Public Advertiser* of the 10th of November, 1755, in the following terms:

THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER, NOVEMBER 10, 1755.

“Our American Countrymen have shewn us, that what has been surmized of, may be very reasonably expected from, Militia. They had Property to lose, and that gave them Spirit to defend it. They were not dragged from Home to be exposed to the Fire of Foreign Invaders for a precarious, and at the same Time a very scanty Subsistence; but voluntarily took up Arms, and went to seek that Enemy, who threatened their Neighbours and themselves with Destruction. These Men were commanded by the Gentlemen of the Country, and of their own Acquaintance, by whom they were treated with Humanity, with Kindness and Respect. Their Fellow Soldiers were Neighbour's Children. The Companions of their Sports and Rural Diversions shared with them their Dangers. In such Company, Men must be double Cowards to behave ill. He who defeats Strangers may go to

¹ Sir Peter Halkett had been taken prisoner at Gladsmuir in 1745, but released on his parole. In February of the following year he was one of five officers who were called upon by the Duke of Cumberland to rejoin their regiments or forfeit their commissions. All five joined in the memorable reply, that “His Royal Highness was master of their commissions, but not of their Honour.” The government of the day, to its honor, upheld the position taken by Sir Peter and his comrades in arms, who had given their parole to the young chevalier.

² The esteem in which Washington was generally held in his earliest manhood was testified to in the previous year by the governor of Virginia, in a letter to the Board of Trade.

his Friends; he who defeats his Friends can make no more. When this War is over, these Men are to go Home, and have Homes to go to. The Prospects of this supports them under all the Perils and Hardships of a Campaign. Labour is never agreeable, but if it leads to Rest, it may be endured. An hard and endless and a fruitless Labour, breaks Men's Spirits; but Hope is a Cordial that will sustain any reasonable Mind. This is at present the State of the American, and may be so of a British Militia."